

EAST ASIA MARITIME TERRITORIAL DISPUTES: CONTEXT AND PARTIES

Disputed Territory	Source of Conflict	Parties Involved	Historical Context
Chunxiao Oil Field	The estimated 1.6 trillion ft ³ natural gas field sits 3 miles west of the median line. Japan contends part of the resources originate from Japanese territory.	Japan, China	The dispute lies within the EEZ of China and Japan; however, the East China Sea is only 360 nautical miles wide, while the EEZ allows for 200 nautical miles of sovereignty for each country.
Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands	Japan, China, and Taiwan claim that the island chain resides within their own territorial waters. The islands provide opportunities for natural resources exploration, as well as important international shipping lanes.	Japan, China, Taiwan	Taiwan and China contend the islands have been under Chinese sovereignty since the 15th Century. Japan claims the islands were allocated to Japan under treaties at the end of the first Sino-Japan war in 1895. China refutes the treaties as null and void and further claims any territory given to Japan was returned to China after WWII.
Chinese Naval Base on Hainan Island	China constructed a naval base on its Hainan Island. Southeast Asian countries fear the base will allow China to increase pressures on other territorial disputes. Japan is concerned about China's ability to dominate the busy shipping lanes. India fears China impeding Indian access to trade in Southeast Asia.	China, Japan, India, Southeast Asia	The South China Sea is surrounded by multiple countries. All have interests in the waterways as a passage for trade.

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Dokdo Rocks (aka Liancourt Rocks) in the Sea of Japan	Both Korea and Japan lay territorial claim to the two rocky islets, their surrounding rocks, and water. Currently, it is internationally considered that of Korea, as their naval base is stationed there, but Japan still registers Dokdo under Goka Village, Oki-gun, Shimane Prefecture and allows Japanese to declare themselves residents.	South Korea, Japan	Korean claims on the islets go back to 512 AD with supporting evidence found in following centuries, including that of Japanese records. However, in 1905 Japan lay claim to the islets during the registration of the Shimane Prefecture of Japan, a time that Korean protests were from a position of weakness with little opportunity for rebuttal. At the end of WWII the Allies renounced Japan's claim to the islets. Japan considers this null and void due to a 1952 Treaty but Korea's sovereignty is still recognized internationally.
Mischief Reef	Although only 130 miles away from Palawan, well inside the EEZ of the Philippines, China has built structures, claimed as shelter for fisherman, which actually more closely resemble military installations.	China, Philippines	In 1994 China built initial structures on stilts while the Philippines Navy was not patrolling due to monsoon season. The Philippines decision to avoid confrontation was partly based on previous Chinese infringements, including the Johnson South Reef Skirmish where 70 Vietnamese troops were killed despite the conflict taking place in Vietnamese territory.
Paracel Islands	The islands are almost equidistant from Chinese and Vietnamese territorial borders, but China recognizes itself as sovereign of the islands despite both Vietnamese and Taiwanese territorial claims.	Primarily China, Vietnam, Taiwan	A conflict between China and the former government of South Vietnam occurred in 1974. "The Battle of the Paracel Islands" resulted in casualties from both sides as well as sunk naval vessels. After the battle, China took responsibility for the islands; however, in 1976 Vietnam reclaimed the islands as a part of Vietnamese territory.
Spratley Islands	Oil reserves, commercial fishing, shipping lanes and extended continental shelf claims as to the United Nation Convention on the Laws of the Sea. Many nearby countries all have interests in making claims to the island's rich resources.	China, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei	Although certain agreements and treaties have been made to quell conflict in the region, there are too many countries of interest to easily divide the spoils of the islands. Disputes have escalated and included fatalities. A 2002 declaration of conduct attempts to prevent open conflict between claimants.

In addition, Stimson has identified the following areas of interest that non-littoral parties have in the disputes:

EAST ASIAN MARITIME DISPUTES: INTERESTS OF NON-CLAIMANT STAKEHOLDERS

	Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands	South China Sea
Free Passage	X	X
Shipping Lane Security	X	X
Oil and Gas Deposits	X	X
Fisheries		X
Coral Reefs and Carbon		X